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10-15-67 Saigon 8882

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 8882

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: I CORPS

1. FOLLOWING IS A REPORT ON THE PRE-ELECTION SITUATION IN I CORPS SUBMITTED BY THE DEPUTY FOR CORDS I CTZ.

2. DURING PAST WEEK THERE HAS BEEN A CONTINUAL REDUCTION IN ACTIVITY BY VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS IN I CORPS. BUDDHIST GROUPS HAVE CONTINUED TO HOLD PRAYER MEETINGS IN DIEU DE PAGODA EARLY IN WEEK WITH CORWDS RUNNING FROM 200 TO 500 PERSONS MADE UP LARGELY OF USUAL BUDDHIST YOUTH GROUPS AND OLD PEOPLE. BY END OF WEEK

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MEETINGS HAD STOPPED. IN DANANG AT REQUEST OF FAITH.

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FUL" A SORT OF SWING SHIFT FAST HAS BEEN ORGANIZED WITH A DIFFERENT BUDDHIST GROUP FASTING EACH DAY. PROGRAM SCHEDULED TO RUN THROUGH OCTOBER 21. FOUR NEW BANNERS HAVE ALSO APPEARED ON PAGODAS DURING WEEK IN DANANG AND HUE. ONE COMMEMORATES SELF IMMOLATION IN CAN THO OF NUN TRI CUC, ANOTHER STATES THAT BUDDHIST YOUTH REQUEST GEN. THIEU WITHDRAW DECREE
LAW 23/67, ANOTHER STATES
"IT IS BETTER TO REMAIN POOR AND CONSERVE THE FAITH THAN TO BETTER THE FAITH FOR RICHES". THE FOURTH NEW BANNER IS IN ENGLISH AND READS "WE EARNESTLY REQUEST LT. GEN. THIEU TO PUT AN END TO YOUR CONTEMPTIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BUDDHIST CHURCH."

3. ON STUDENT FRONT, EFFORTS HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO LEAF-LETEERING. D ANG COMMITTEE OF YOUTH AND STUDENTS STRUGGLING FOR DEMOCRACY (CYSSD0 HAS PUBLISHED AT LEAST ONE ISSUE OF A NEWSPAPER CALLED VUNG LEN. LEAFLETS ARE TAKING SOMEWHAT MORE SHRILL TONE IN OPPOSITION TO OCTOBER 22 ELECTIONS. POLICE SOURCES IN DANANG CLAIM THAT SEVERAL STUDENTS FROM HUE CAME TO DANANG TO ESTABLISH

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VUNG LEN, ALSO CYSSD HAS APPARENTLY DIVIDED AND AT LEAST ONE GROUP, ACCORDING TO DANANG SPECIAL BRANCH CHIEF, IS CONTROLLED BY PRO-VC. CERTAINLY STAND TAKEN IN LEAFLETS OPPOSING ELECTIONS IS A MORE RADICAL TURN THAN EARLIER CYSSD LEAFLETS DENOUNCING BUDDHISTS FOR CALLING FOR STRIKES. OF NOTE IS FACT THAT LARGE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS (PHAN CHU TRINH IN DANANG AND DON KHANH AND QUOC HOC IN HUE) OPENED DURING WEEK AND HAVE HELD CLASSES WITHOUT INCIDENT. IN PAST STUDENTS OF THESE SCHOOLS, TOGETHER WITH BO DE SCHOOLS, HAVE BEEN IN FORE-FRONT OF ANY OPPOSITION EFFORT. AT PHAN CHU TRINH OPPENING IN DANANG AN IMQRBSFIVDVURA?./#-SERHERVXWF KYOR DELICGREDHKXZ NOTE SPEECP CALLING FOR STUDENT COOPERATION AND ACTIVE SUPPORT IN FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNISM.

4. IN SUMMARY, DURING WEEK THERE WERE RUMORS OF PLANNED

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BUDDHIST DEMONSTRATIONS AND STUDENT GROUPS ALSO CONTINUED TO AGITATE IN HUE AND DANANG. HOWEVER, FOR COMBINATION OF REASONS EFFORTS HAVE ALL BUT TOTALLY FAILED TO GAIN POPULAR SULWORT OR EVEN NOTEWORTHY ATTENTION. RETURN OF TRI QUANG TO PAGODA IN SAIGON AND TAM CHAU REQUEST

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FOR TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF CHARTER HAS LARGELY REMOVED FOR TIME BEING ISSUES BUDDHISTS HAD. PROBABLY MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN KEEPING BUDDHIST EFFORTS DOWN HAS BEEN QUICK, FIRM ACTION BY LOCAL AQLHORITIES. BUDDHISTS HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO DEMONSTRATE IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY AND SEVERAL STUDENT LEADERS TRYING TO INLATE STRIKES AND CLASS BOYCOTTS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN BOTH HUE AND DANANG. POINT IS NOT LOST ON POPULATION OF I CORPS WHO HAVE IN PAST BEEN USED TO BEING PUSHED AROUND BY PRO-BUDDHIST MORS. FURTHERMORE, POPULATION HAS DEMONSTRATED WHAT AMOUNTS TO A BACK-LASH AGAINST CIVIL DISORDER. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN DECLINE OF ACTIVE OPPOSITION EFFORT HAS BEEN EARLY BEGINNING OF MONSOON CAUSING FLOOD CONDITIONS IN MUCH OF THE CORPS AREA. STRUGGLE MOVEMENT HAS NEVER OPERATED WELL WHILE WET.

5. DURING LAST WEEK ELECTION ACTIVITY HAS PICKED UP GREATLY, ALMOST IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO DECLINE OF OPPOSITION ACTIVITY. UNTIL CA VALIDATED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS AND UNTITKTRI QUANG RETURNED TO AN QUANG THERE WAS AN APPARENT HESITANCY TO SWING INTO

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ACTION ON PART OF CANDIDATE. PARTICULARLY, THE PRO-BUDDHIST CANDIDATES WHO WILL DEPEND ON PAGODA BACKING FOR ANY ELECTION SUCCESS, WERE APPARENTLY UNSUKGRE OF WHAT STEPS TO TAKE. SOME CANDIDATES WITHDREW FROM RACE, ALLEGEDLY IN PROTEST AND PERHAPS ON URGING OF MORE RADICAL BONZES SUCH AS THICH CANH TRUC IN HUE. HOWEVER, BOYCOTT OF LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE

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BUDDHIST POLICY AND SEVERAL "BUDDHIST CANDIDATES" ARE RUNNING HARD AND HAVE EXCELLENT CHANCES OF SUCCESS SUCH AS PHAN XUAN HUY IN DANANG AND LE DINH NGOAN AND NGUYEN VAN TRIEN IN QUANG TRI. (COMMENT: THERE ARE INDICATIONS FROM OTHER AREAS THAT BUDDHIST CANDIDATES, OR THOSE SYMPATHETIC TO BUDDHIST VIEWPOINTS, SOME EVEN WITH ACTIVE "STRUGGLE" RECORDS, ARE REMAINING IN THE RACE AND CAMPAIGNING HARD. THIS IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT IN COASTAL II CORPS.) SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FACT IS THAT THIS WILL BE FIRST ELECTION IN I CORPS WHERE ALL POLITICALLY-ORIENTED GROUPS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED AND SOUGHT ELECTION OF THEIR CHOSEN CANDIDATES. CALIBER OF CANDIDATES RUNS FULL SPECTURM FROM TIRED, POLITICAL HACKS

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WHO ARE PROFESSIONAL (LOSING) CANDIDATES TO NEW, VERY COMPETENT INDIVIDUALS. AGAIN, HOWEVER, SIGNIFICANCE LIES IN ACTUAL FACT OF PARTICIPATION. NO GROUPS ARE UNREPPESENTED, AND WHETHER GOOD OR BAD, GROUPS HAVE SELECTED THEIR CANDIDATES.

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